

## United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4802

September 27, 2012

Dr. Marsha Krotseng  
President  
Bluefield State College  
219 Rock Street  
Bluefield, West Virginia 24701-2198

Dear Dr. Krotseng,

Thank you for your leadership on education in the state and for your dedication to training West Virginia's next generation of health care professionals. You and your faculty must take great pride in the quality of practitioners who graduate from your school and in the contributions they make to the health of residents throughout our state. One area where our health care practitioners are increasingly on the frontlines – along with family members and law enforcement – is in the growing prescription drug abuse epidemic. It is for this reason that I am writing to seek your input and advice regarding ways that we can begin to stem the tide of this devastating epidemic.

In March, I held a hearing in the Senate Finance Committee to discuss possible solutions to prescription drug abuse. I heard testimony from health care professionals, including Dr. Jeff Coben of West Virginia University, about the dire need for better training, care coordination, and the right information at the point of care, in order to provide patients with the highest-quality and safest pain care. As a follow-up to that hearing, and in light of the ongoing challenges with prescription drug abuse in West Virginia, I wanted to also seek additional input regarding potential solutions from experts throughout the medical field. Specifically, I am interested in your answers to the following questions:

### **Provider Education and Training**

- As you know, opioid painkillers are the most commonly-abused prescription drugs in West Virginia and nationwide. When used safely, these drugs can be an important component of treating pain. Yet, according to the independent Institute of Medicine's report, *Relieving Pain in America*, there are major gaps in knowledge about pain. What steps is your school taking to educate your students about the prescription drug abuse epidemic, safe and appropriate prescribing of controlled substances, and how to identify patients who may be seeking prescriptions for purposes that are not valid, including how to use prescription monitoring programs?
- Is your institution teaching students about ways to identify patients at risk of addiction and refer them to appropriate treatment?

- What are the key barriers or challenges to training students in this area?
- Do you have any additional recommendations on health professions education with regard to safe and appropriate use of controlled substances?

### Consumer Education

- How do you train your students on educating patients on safe and appropriate use of prescription drugs, including controlled substances?
- What recommendations do you have for improving consumer education and patient engagement more generally when it comes to safe and appropriate use of prescription medications, particularly painkillers?

### Care Coordination and Health Care Innovations

- The Institute of Medicine, in its report on *Relieving Pain in America*, recommended that “undergraduate and graduate training programs should offer standardized information about pain and include experience in caring for pain in interprofessional settings.”
- What steps is your organization taking, or considering, to train health professions students to work across disciplines to help prevent and mitigate prescription drug abuse?
- Do you have recommendations for additional innovations in health care delivery that could improve prevention and treatment of prescription drug addiction and overdose?

As we approach **National Medicine Abuse Awareness Month in October**, I also wanted to make you aware of a few key events coming up in the state this week:

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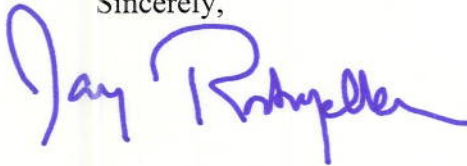


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The need for your profession's expertise is essential as we seek to stem the tide of this devastating epidemic. Your responses to the above questions will be particularly helpful as I prepare to re-introduce the Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (S. 507), comprehensive legislation that I have authored to address the prescription drug abuse epidemic. I look forward to your response by October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2012.

Once again, I appreciate your leadership role in health care in West Virginia and look forward to continuing our work together to fight the epidemic of prescription drug abuse in the state.

Sincerely,



John D. Rockefeller IV

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September 27, 2012

Ms. Josephine Kahler  
Dean, School of Health Science  
University of Charleston  
2300 MacCorkle Avenue, SE  
Charleston, West Virginia 25304-1099

Dear Ms. Kahler,

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Dr. Susan B. Leight  
West Virginia Wesleyan College  
59 College Ave  
Buckhannon, West Virginia 26201-2600

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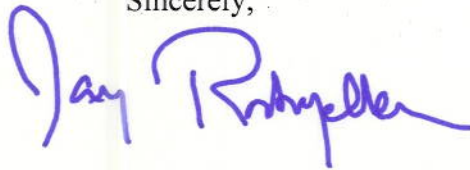


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John D. Rockefeller IV

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September 27, 2012

Mr. Michael D. Adelman, D.O., J.D., D.P.M.  
President  
West Virginia School of  
Osteopathic Medicine  
400 North Lee Street  
Lewisburg, West Virginia 24901-1128

Dear Mr. Adelman,

Thank you for your leadership on education in the state and for your dedication to training West Virginia's next generation of health care professionals. You and your faculty must take great pride in the quality of practitioners who graduate from your school and in the contributions they make to the health of residents throughout our state. One area where our health care practitioners are increasingly on the frontlines – along with family members and law enforcement – is in the growing prescription drug abuse epidemic. It is for this reason that I am writing to seek your input and advice regarding ways that we can begin to stem the tide of this devastating epidemic.

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Dr. Pamela Balch  
President  
West Virginia Wesleyan College  
59 College Ave.  
Buckhannon, West Virginia 26201-2600

Dear Dr. Balch,

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Richard Allen Beyer  
President  
Wheeling Jesuit University  
316 Washington Ave.  
Wheeling, West Virginia 26003-6295

Dear Mr. Beyer,

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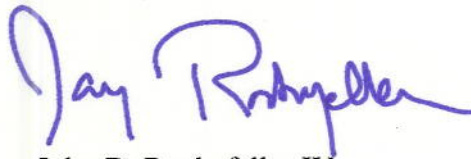
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Dr. Mary Sharon Boni  
Dean  
School of Nursing and Allied Health Administration  
Fairmont State University  
245 Education Building  
1201 Locust Avenue  
Fairmont, West Virginia 26554-2451

Dear Dr. Boni,

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Once again, I appreciate your leadership role in health care in West Virginia and look forward to continuing our work together to fight the epidemic of prescription drug abuse in the state.

Sincerely,

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John D. Rockefeller IV

## United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4802

September 27, 2012

Mr. Robin Capehart  
President  
West Liberty University  
101 Faculty Drive  
West Liberty, West Virginia 26074

Dear Mr. Capehart,

Thank you for your leadership on education in the state and for your dedication to training West Virginia's next generation of health care professionals. You and your faculty must take great pride in the quality of practitioners who graduate from your school and in the contributions they make to the health of residents throughout our state. One area where our health care practitioners are increasingly on the frontlines – along with family members and law enforcement – is in the growing prescription drug abuse epidemic. It is for this reason that I am writing to seek your input and advice regarding ways that we can begin to stem the tide of this devastating epidemic.

In March, I held a hearing in the Senate Finance Committee to discuss possible solutions to prescription drug abuse. I heard testimony from health care professionals, including Dr. Jeff Coben of West Virginia University, about the dire need for better training, care coordination, and the right information at the point of care, in order to provide patients with the highest-quality and safest pain care. As a follow-up to that hearing, and in light of the ongoing challenges with prescription drug abuse in West Virginia, I wanted to also seek additional input regarding potential solutions from experts throughout the medical field. Specifically, I am interested in your answers to the following questions:

### **Provider Education and Training**

- As you know, opioid painkillers are the most commonly-abused prescription drugs in West Virginia and nationwide. When used safely, these drugs can be an important component of treating pain. Yet, according to the independent Institute of Medicine's report, *Relieving Pain in America*, there are major gaps in knowledge about pain. What steps is your school taking to educate your students about the prescription drug abuse epidemic, safe and appropriate prescribing of controlled substances, and how to identify patients who may be seeking prescriptions for purposes that are not valid, including how to use prescription monitoring programs?
- Is your institution teaching students about ways to identify patients at risk of addiction and refer them to appropriate treatment?



- What are the key barriers or challenges to training students in this area?
- Do you have any additional recommendations on health professions education with regard to safe and appropriate use of controlled substances?

### **Consumer Education**

- How do you train your students on educating patients on safe and appropriate use of prescription drugs, including controlled substances?
- What recommendations do you have for improving consumer education and patient engagement more generally when it comes to safe and appropriate use of prescription medications, particularly painkillers?

### **Care Coordination and Health Care Innovations**

- The Institute of Medicine, in its report on *Relieving Pain in America*, recommended that “undergraduate and graduate training programs should offer standardized information about pain and include experience in caring for pain in interprofessional settings.”
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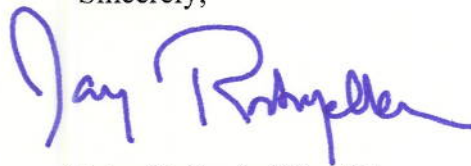
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Sincerely,



John D. Rockefeller IV



## United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4802

September 27, 2012

Dr. Patricia Chase  
Dean  
WVU School of Pharmacy  
Po Box 9500  
Morgantown, West Virginia 26506-9500

Dear Dr. Chase,

Thank you for your leadership on education in the state and for your dedication to training West Virginia's next generation of health care professionals. You and your faculty must take great pride in the quality of practitioners who graduate from your school and in the contributions they make to the health of residents throughout our state. One area where our health care practitioners are increasingly on the frontlines – along with family members and law enforcement – is in the growing prescription drug abuse epidemic. It is for this reason that I am writing to seek your input and advice regarding ways that we can begin to stem the tide of this devastating epidemic.

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## United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4802

September 27, 2012

Mr. Richard Creehan  
President  
Alderson-Broaddus College  
101 College Hill Dr.  
Philippi, West Virginia 26416-4600

Dear Mr. Creehan,

Thank you for your leadership on education in the state and for your dedication to training West Virginia's next generation of health care professionals. You and your faculty must take great pride in the quality of practitioners who graduate from your school and in the contributions they make to the health of residents throughout our state. One area where our health care practitioners are increasingly on the frontlines – along with family members and law enforcement – is in the growing prescription drug abuse epidemic. It is for this reason that I am writing to seek your input and advice regarding ways that we can begin to stem the tide of this devastating epidemic.

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## United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4802

September 27, 2012

Dr. Christopher C. Colenda  
Chancellor for Health Sciences  
West Virginia University  
Robert C. Byrd Health Sciences Center  
Health Sciences Center, Suite 1000  
Post Office Box 9000  
Morgantown, West Virginia 26506

Dear Dr. Colenda,

Thank you for your leadership on education in the state and for your dedication to training West Virginia's next generation of health care professionals. You and your faculty must take great pride in the quality of practitioners who graduate from your school and in the contributions they make to the health of residents throughout our state. One area where our health care practitioners are increasingly on the frontlines – along with family members and law enforcement – is in the growing prescription drug abuse epidemic. It is for this reason that I am writing to seek your input and advice regarding ways that we can begin to stem the tide of this devastating epidemic.

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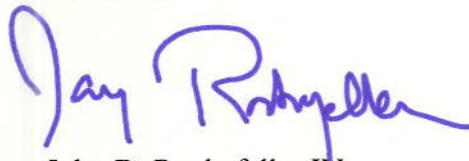


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John D. Rockefeller IV

## United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4802

September 27, 2012

Dr. James P. Clements  
President  
West Virginia University  
Stewart Hall  
Post Office Box 6201  
Morgantown, West Virginia 26506-6201

Dear Dr. Clements,

Thank you for your leadership on education in the state and for your dedication to training West Virginia's next generation of health care professionals. You and your faculty must take great pride in the quality of practitioners who graduate from your school and in the contributions they make to the health of residents throughout our state. One area where our health care practitioners are increasingly on the frontlines – along with family members and law enforcement – is in the growing prescription drug abuse epidemic. It is for this reason that I am writing to seek your input and advice regarding ways that we can begin to stem the tide of this devastating epidemic.

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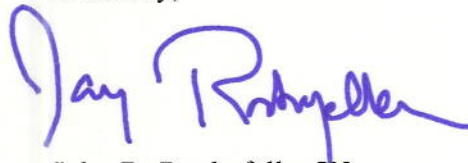
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## United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4802

September 27, 2012

Ms. Michelle Easton, Pharm. D.  
Dean  
School of Pharmacy  
University of Charleston  
2300 MacCorkle Ave SE  
Charleston, West Virginia 25304-1045

Dear Ms. Easton,

Thank you for your leadership on education in the state and for your dedication to training West Virginia's next generation of health care professionals. You and your faculty must take great pride in the quality of practitioners who graduate from your school and in the contributions they make to the health of residents throughout our state. One area where our health care practitioners are increasingly on the frontlines – along with family members and law enforcement – is in the growing prescription drug abuse epidemic. It is for this reason that I am writing to seek your input and advice regarding ways that we can begin to stem the tide of this devastating epidemic.

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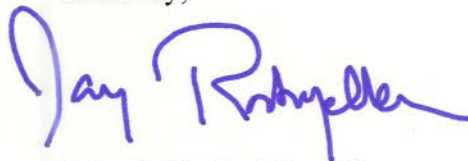


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## United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4802

September 27, 2012

Dr. David A. Felton  
Dean  
West Virginia School of Dentistry  
Post Office Box 9400  
Morgantown, West Virginia 26506-9400

Dear Dr. Felton,

Thank you for your leadership on education in the state and for your dedication to training West Virginia's next generation of health care professionals. You and your faculty must take great pride in the quality of practitioners who graduate from your school and in the contributions they make to the health of residents throughout our state. One area where our health care practitioners are increasingly on the frontlines – along with family members and law enforcement – is in the growing prescription drug abuse epidemic. It is for this reason that I am writing to seek your input and advice regarding ways that we can begin to stem the tide of this devastating epidemic.

In March, I held a hearing in the Senate Finance Committee to discuss possible solutions to prescription drug abuse. I heard testimony from health care professionals, including Dr. Jeff Coben of West Virginia University, about the dire need for better training, care coordination, and the right information at the point of care, in order to provide patients with the highest-quality and safest pain care. As a follow-up to that hearing, and in light of the ongoing challenges with prescription drug abuse in West Virginia, I wanted to also seek additional input regarding potential solutions from experts throughout the medical field. Specifically, I am interested in your answers to the following questions:

### **Provider Education and Training**

- As you know, opioid painkillers are the most commonly-abused prescription drugs in West Virginia and nationwide. When used safely, these drugs can be an important component of treating pain. Yet, according to the independent Institute of Medicine's report, *Relieving Pain in America*, there are major gaps in knowledge about pain. What steps is your school taking to educate your students about the prescription drug abuse epidemic, safe and appropriate prescribing of controlled substances, and how to identify patients who may be seeking prescriptions for purposes that are not valid, including how to use prescription monitoring programs?
- Is your institution teaching students about ways to identify patients at risk of addiction and refer them to appropriate treatment?



- Is your institution teaching students about ways to identify patients at risk of addiction and refer them to appropriate treatment?
- What are the key barriers or challenges to training students in this area?
- Do you have any additional recommendations on health professions education with regard to safe and appropriate use of controlled substances?

### **Consumer Education**

- How do you train your students on educating patients on safe and appropriate use of prescription drugs, including controlled substances?
- What recommendations do you have for improving consumer education and patient engagement more generally when it comes to safe and appropriate use of prescription medications, particularly painkillers?

### **Care Coordination and Health Care Innovations**

- The Institute of Medicine, in its report on *Relieving Pain in America*, recommended that “undergraduate and graduate training programs should offer standardized information about pain and include experience in caring for pain in interprofessional settings.”
- What steps is your organization taking, or considering, to train health professions students to work across disciplines to help prevent and mitigate prescription drug abuse?
- Do you have recommendations for additional innovations in health care delivery that could improve prevention and treatment of prescription drug addiction and overdose?

As we approach **National Medicine Abuse Awareness Month in October**, I also wanted to make you aware of a few key events coming up in the state this week:

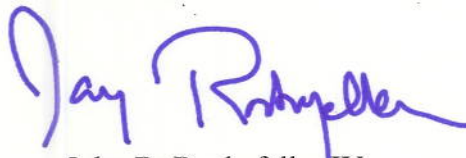
- **On Friday, September 28, from 8:30 am to 4:45 pm, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) will offer a prescription drug continuing education course at the West Virginia Osteopathic School.** This course is open to physicians, dentists, nurses, physician assistants and others who care for patients receiving opioid medications. I requested that SAMHSA come to the state to offer this course because of the steep increase in deaths and overdoses from prescription drugs, especially prescription painkillers, in recent years. More information about this course is available at <http://www.wvsom.edu/MediaCenter/Sept-25-12-opioids-cme> or by calling 304-647-6358. I hope you will encourage your colleagues to attend.

September 29, 2012 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. You can find a list of all participating locations by entering your zip code at [www.dea.gov](http://www.dea.gov).

The need for your profession's expertise is essential as we seek to stem the tide of this devastating epidemic. Your responses to the above questions will be particularly helpful as I prepare to re-introduce the Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (S. 507), comprehensive legislation that I have authored to address the prescription drug abuse epidemic. I look forward to your response by October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2012.

Once again, I appreciate your leadership role in health care in West Virginia and look forward to continuing our work together to fight the epidemic of prescription drug abuse in the state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jay Rockefeller", with a stylized, flowing script.

John D. Rockefeller IV